

Pueblo Was Not Intruding On Day of Capture, U.S. Says

By Warren Unna

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Johnson Administration yesterday shifted from saying the U.S. Navy intelligence ship Pueblo had never intruded in North Korea's territorial waters to saying it hadn't intruded on the day it was captured, Jan. 23.

State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey, in criticizing an editorial in yesterday's editions of The Washington Post, called a special press briefing. He announced that Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, in his televised defense of the Pueblo case before the U.N. Security Council Jan. 26, "was directing his remarks to the day it was seized."

On Capitol Hill, House Republican Leader Gerald R. Ford (Mich.) announced: "The Johnson Administration apparently is getting ready to 'confess' to North Korea that the Pueblo intruded into North Korean territorial waters."

On Sunday, Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk conceded on the television program that there was a slight possibility that the Pueblo might have trespassed within the 12-mile limits of North Korea's waters during a Jan. 10 to 21 period of radio silence. North Korea seized the ship and its 83-man crew on Jan. 23.

When the Pueblo first was seized the Administration

gave every impression that it the one dead and three wounded Pueblo crewmen.

had never trespassed into North Korean waters at any time and had scrupulously stayed out to sea several miles beyond even the limits North Korea claims.

The shifts in Administration statements came as stories began appearing in the South Korean and Japanese press that North Korea would shortly agree to free at least

The PUEBLO, AID, Col. 1

on the neutral North-South Korean demarcation zone. McCloskey said the mere fact that talks were continuing for the release of the Pueblo and her crew "might be considered progress." But he cautioned against any suggestion of a "breakthrough."

In its broadcasts, North Korea has been demanding a U.S. admission of trespassing and an apology.

Ambassador Goldberg, it was learned, was particularly sensitive to any suggestion that he might have misled the U.N. Security Council in his presentation of the Pueblo case.

Using detailed information supplied him by the Administration, Goldberg assured the U.N. on Jan. 26: "The location of the Pueblo was constantly far away from Korean shores, always away from the 12-mile limit until it was taken."

The State Department yesterday, 10 days later, emphasized that Goldberg was referring to the day the Pueblo actually was seized.

Goldberg, a close friend of

his late predecessor, Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, long has been familiar with Stevenson's embarrassment in assuring the U.N. in 1961 of the United States' complete innocence in the CIA's abortive Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba.

Goldberg's now qualified remarks of the Pueblo's course would appear to differ from those of Rusk. After briefing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the same day Goldberg spoke at the U.N., Rusk was quoted as telling reporters the Pueblo had been in "international waters at all stages, according to every indication that we have."

Prior to Rusk's top-level affirmation, other Administration officials had given statements indicating the Pueblo was under strict orders never to enter North Korean waters and, in fact, never had.